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## Occupational Employment and Wages in Columbia — May 2015

Workers in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.29 in May 2015, about 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 20 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; computer and mathematical; and business and financial operations.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including office and administrative support; healthcare practitioners and technical; and installation, maintenance, and repair. Conversely, eight groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including personal care and service; construction and extraction; and food preparation and serving related. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Columbia	United States	Columbia	Percent difference <sup>(1)</sup>
Total, all occupations.....	100.0%	100.0%	\$23.23	\$20.29*	-13
Management.....	5.0	4.6*	55.30	48.88*	-12
Business and Financial Operations.....	5.1	5.2	35.48	28.56*	-20
Computer and Mathematical.....	2.9	2.9	41.43	32.24*	-22
Architecture and Engineering.....	1.8	1.6*	39.89	32.93*	-17
Life, Physical, and Social Science.....	0.8	0.5*	34.24	28.93*	-16
Community and Social Services.....	1.4	1.4	22.19	19.12*	-14
Legal.....	0.8	1.1*	49.74	34.18*	-31
Education, Training, and Library.....	6.2	6.2	25.48	22.92*	-10
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media.....	1.3	1.0*	27.39	21.67*	-21
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical.....	5.8	6.5*	37.40	32.01*	-14
Healthcare Support.....	2.9	2.8	14.19	13.24*	-7
Protective Service.....	2.4	2.9*	21.45	16.63*	-22
Food Preparation and Serving Related.....	9.1	8.6*	10.98	9.31*	-15
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance.....	3.2	2.9	13.02	11.15*	-14
Personal Care and Service.....	3.1	2.3*	12.33	10.81*	-12
Sales and Related.....	10.5	10.5	18.90	16.06*	-15
Office and Administrative Support.....	15.8	17.4*	17.47	16.38*	-6
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry.....	0.3	0.2*	12.67	13.27	5
Construction and Extraction.....	4.0	3.3*	22.88	18.97*	-17

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Columbia	United States	Columbia	Percent difference <sup>(1)</sup>
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair.....	3.9	4.2*	22.11	20.99*	-5
Production.....	6.6	6.9	17.41	17.43	0
Transportation and Material Moving.....	6.9	6.9	16.90	15.55*	-8

<sup>(1)</sup> A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Columbia is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

\* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Columbia had 63,220 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 17.4 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 15.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.38, significantly below the national wage of \$17.47.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the office and administrative support group included customer service representatives (9,880), secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (7,920), and first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers (6,560). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$23.68 and \$22.79, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks (\$9.68) and stock clerks and order fillers (\$10.90). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_17900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_17900.htm).)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping were employed at 2.6 times the national rate in Columbia, and insurance claims and policy processing clerks, at 2.0 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, medical secretaries had a location quotient of 1.0 in Columbia, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce.

## **Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data**

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa\\_def.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm).

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

### **Technical Note**

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm).

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,763 establishments with a response rate of 67 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/soc](http://www.bls.gov/soc) and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at [www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm).

### **Metropolitan area definitions**

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Columbia, S.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Richland, and Saluda Counties.

### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/regions/southeast](http://www.bls.gov/regions/southeast). Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm). Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods\\_statement.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf).

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015**

Occupation <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level <sup>(2)</sup>	Location quotient <sup>(3)</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>(4)</sup>
Office and Administrative Support Occupations.....	63,220	1.1	\$16.38	\$34,080
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers.....	6,560	1.8	23.68	49,250
Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service.....	310	1.2	13.06	27,170
Bill and Account Collectors.....	1,190	1.4	15.91	33,100
Billing and Posting Clerks.....	1,450	1.1	15.75	32,750
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks.....	3,840	0.9	17.11	35,590
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks.....	330	0.8	19.60	40,770
Procurement Clerks.....	380	2.0	19.05	39,620
Tellers.....	1,020	0.8	13.02	27,080
Brokerage Clerks.....	70	0.4	21.58	44,890
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks.....	290	0.9	17.92	37,280
Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks.....	110	1.0	16.19	33,660
Customer Service Representatives.....	9,880	1.5	15.93	33,130
Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs.....	50	0.2	20.43	42,500
File Clerks.....	370	1.0	13.30	27,660
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks.....	730	1.1	9.68	20,120
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan.....	610	1.3	14.27	29,670
Library Assistants, Clerical.....	280	1.1	11.38	23,680
Loan Interviewers and Clerks.....	430	0.8	17.60	36,600
New Accounts Clerks.....	70	0.6	16.46	34,240
Order Clerks.....	350	0.7	17.37	36,140
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping.....	940	2.6	16.10	33,480
Receptionists and Information Clerks.....	2,670	1.0	13.01	27,070
Information and Record Clerks, All Other.....	350	0.8	19.61	40,780
Cargo and Freight Agents.....	60	0.3	21.56	44,840
Couriers and Messengers.....	300	1.5	11.19	23,270
Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers.....	210	0.9	14.88	30,950
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance.....	290	0.6	19.77	41,130
Meter Readers, Utilities.....	120	1.4	17.14	35,650
Postal Service Clerks.....	120	0.6	23.97	49,860
Postal Service Mail Carriers.....	760	0.9	24.25	50,450
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators.....	450	1.6	23.20	48,250
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks.....	<sup>(5)</sup>	<sup>(5)</sup>	23.61	49,110
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks.....	1,610	0.9	15.03	31,260
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers.....	4,310	0.9	10.90	22,670
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping.....	320	1.8	10.57	21,990
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants.....	1,020	0.6	22.79	47,410
Legal Secretaries.....	510	1.0	20.46	42,560
Medical Secretaries.....	1,400	1.0	15.10	31,420
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive.....	7,920	1.3	15.40	32,030
Computer Operators.....	130	0.9	19.42	40,400
Data Entry Keyers.....	660	1.3	13.72	28,540
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks.....	1,370	2.0	15.86	32,980
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service.....	340	1.4	13.83	28,770
Office Clerks, General.....	5,690	0.7	12.78	26,570

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015 - Continued**

Occupation <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level <sup>(2)</sup>	Location quotient <sup>(3)</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>(4)</sup>
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other.....	430	0.7	21.77	45,280

<sup>(1)</sup> For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Columbia, SC, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_17900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_17900.htm).

<sup>(2)</sup> Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

<sup>(3)</sup> The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

<sup>(4)</sup> Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

<sup>(5)</sup> Estimate not released.